News from Ed Markey

United States Congress **Massachusetts Seventh District**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **CONTACT: Tara McGuinness or**
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(202) 225-2836

FDA Responds to Requests to Improve Database of Drug Side Effects Information for Consumers and Healthcare Professionals

Rep. Markey Lauds FDA's Announcement as an Important First Step

Washington, D.C. – Six months after Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, first requested that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) create a user friendly data base for consumers to search for information about the side effects of drugs, the FDA has responded by revamping its website to better assist consumers. Rep. Markey contacted officials and sent letters to the FDA urging the agency to create an interactive, user friendly database where consumers and healthcare professionals can find complete, accurate and timely information about the known side effects of drugs on the market and recently removed from the market.

"Consumers should not have to unscramble the web version of a Rubik's Cube in order to find information about the dangerous side effects of FDA approved drugs. The FDA's recognition of the problem and plans to make drug safety information available in a user-friendly format for consumers is an important first step," said Rep. Markey.

Over the past year, many concerns have been raised about the side effects of FDA approved drugs on the market. The extensive media attention focused on the potential side effects and complications associated with drugs like Vioxx, Celebrex, naproxen, ibuprofen, Tysabri, and Bextra, has the potential to be extremely confusing and anxiety producing for both consumers and healthcare professionals. Consumers need a place that they can turn to for complete and accurate drug safety information. However, the FDA website is difficult to navigate, lacks one central location for all drug safety information and often raises more questions than it provides answers about drug safety.

Rep. Markey said, "I hope the FDA will continue to find new ways to inform consumers and healthcare professionals about the new information on the dangerous side effects of FDA approved drugs. The FDA has a responsibility to provide the public with complete, accurate and timely information about all drugs on the market and drugs that have been recently removed from the market."

For more information on Rep. Markey's work on FDA reform and copies of the letters sent to the FDA, please go to http://www.house.gov/markey/healthgen.htm

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